

REMARKS

I. Status of the Application

Claims 1-6 have been examined. The Examiner has indicated that claims 5 and 6 contain allowable subject matter. Claims 1-4 remain rejected on prior art grounds. By the present Amendment, Applicant has incorporated the subject matter of claim 5 into claims 1 and 4, and has canceled claim 5 without prejudice or disclaimer. Thus, upon entry of the present Amendment, claims 1-4 and 6 will be all the claims pending in the application.

II. Claim Rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over U.S. Patent No. 6,693,673 to Tanaka et al. ("Tanaka") in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,618,090 to Kidono et al. ("Kidono")

Claims 1-4 remain rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over Tanaka in view of Kidono.

As mentioned above, Applicant has amended independent claims 1 and 4 to include the subject matter of claim 5, which the Examiner has indicated would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Accordingly, Applicant submits that claims 1 and 4 are patentable over Tanaka in view of Kidono for at least the foregoing reason. Since claims 2, 3 and 6 are dependent upon claim 1, Applicant further submits that such claims are patentable over Tanaka and Kidono at least by virtue of their dependency.

III. Conclusion

In view of the above, reconsideration and allowance of this application are now believed to be in order, and such actions are hereby solicited. If any points remain in issue which the

AMENDMENT UNDER 37 C.F.R. § 1.116
U.S. APPLN. NO. 10/809,494

ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.: Q80450

Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

The USPTO is directed and authorized to charge all required fees, except for the Issue Fee and the Publication Fee, to Deposit Account No. 19-4880. Please also credit any overpayments to said Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,

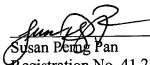
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